

THE
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JOHN MURRAY, LONDON.**THE FUNCTIONS OF A LIBRARY.**

THE library of whose functions we are thinking is not the picked library of the book-lover, who chooses and buys his books slowly and with a devoted care. We are thinking, rather, of the big circulating library. More than ever in the coming days of hard economy will the choice and private library be limited and the wholesale or trade library be drawn upon. The fact has to be faced by publishers and booksellers alike that expensive books will be bought less and more often borrowed from the circulating libraries as the pinch of the war grows harder and harder. The old process whereby book-producing and book-distributing has for many years tended to become more wholesale and less individual will go further yet under the stress of the budgets and economies of war. The public will buy books less and will use the circulating libraries more than they have hitherto done. The development will rapidly progress of a system—the modern or wholesale system—which was already far advanced before the war began. It is therefore not impertinent to inquire what precisely is the character and intention of this system.

Publishers, however keen they may be to put good craft into their work and a careful judgment into their choice of books, have long had to recognise that the day of the bibliophile has given place to the day of wholesale circulation. The book which once was chosen and prepared with care for private purchase has now to be offered rapidly and persistently to the great sifting and circulating institutions, which devour a score of books where the old purchaser and collector took only one or two. The public itself has become the appraiser. Books are produced in great numbers and passed into circulation by the libraries. Out of this mass of printed matter the public decides what it shall read. In place of putting before the reader a chosen and tested specimen, a number of diverse articles are submitted, as it were, on approval. Those which the public fancy are immediately acquired in great numbers. Those which have in them any quality of endurance are permanently added to the stock. The rest—the great mass of the undistinguished—pass rapidly out of circulation. Such is the democratic system of producing and distributing books. The old publisher, like the old political chief, dictated the taste of his clients. The new publisher, like the new political leader, has more or less to follow the taste of his subscribers. This does not necessarily imply that the publisher need regard himself as a mere tradesman, any more than intelligent democracy implies that a politician need be the slave of his constituents. The reading public will show itself as loyal to those who serve it with an able and honest endeavour to achieve good work as it is to the man of character and acumen in public life who ventures to lead and refuses to follow. But publishers have to realise that the age of producing and thinking for the few is past. They publish to-day first and foremost for the libraries.

In the carrying out of this modern policy of book-producing there are, of course, many different ways and examples. Some of the big publishers carry the wholesale method to excess, and shoot out annually vast and bewildering quantities of printed matter into the book markets and libraries. Others are less wholesale; and their name carries a preliminary guarantee that some part of the selective work has already been done before their books pass into the libraries and into the hands of the public jurymen. War finance will probably a little check those more speculative publishers who have tended quite frankly to shift almost the whole burden of choice to the public. Not even the libraries are to-day in a position to purchase such vast quantities of speedily forgotten matter as issued from certain publishers in the years before the war.

But war finance, though it will check mere speculation in doubtful MSS., will definitely set a seal upon the wholesale principle; because it will still further restrict the private purchasing of books. It is to the libraries that the public will look for their chief sources of recreation in the ensuing seasons. The circulating library opens to the subscriber almost the whole field of contemporary authorship for the price of an evening at the theatre. The library is recreation cheaply purchased; and it is a kind of recreation which cannot be safely omitted. Books are as essential as anything can be which is not food or clothing or fuel; and there is no reason to fear that the publishing business will collapse for want of subscribers to the libraries. On the contrary it is quite conceivable that, as people stay more at home and spend less in entertainments and theatres, they will read more books and make greater demands upon the circulating library, even if they do not end by becoming occasional and judicious buyers of the books which are necessary.

So far the publishers can afford to look back with a fair degree of gallantly earned satisfaction upon their career during the war. In the second year of war we still find it necessary to print a supplement in order to deal at all adequately with the books—many of them books on which much care and thought and capital have been expended—which they are still producing alike for buyers and for subscribers to the libraries. There is a constant section of the public which realises that economy in books is not necessarily sound economy because it happens to be on the face of it rather an obvious economy; which realises also that, despite the wholesale method of to-day, there must still be kept a shelf for the book which occasionally seems to be an indispensable addition to the old stock on which many of us have had recently for the most part to live. Many publishers have acted, since war broke out, with courage and energy. They have made a better fight than anyone could reasonably have predicted in August 1914, and many of them, though they have put a brave outward face on things, are perhaps rather astonished to find themselves alive to-day and able to put forth good work. We would again urge the reading and also the buying public that on the list of luxuries to be cut down literature should be put low for more than a merely economic reason. The economic reason for putting literature low on the list can be found. How many people, for example, spend expensive and wearisome evenings for lack of being supplied with a good book and of having cultivated the habit of being amused by a good book! But the economic reason yields to the fact that refreshment of the mind is essential to public health; and that no sort of refreshment is more permanent and satisfying than the refreshment of a well-chosen and well-digested book.

For the old book-lover, of course, nothing can replace the bought and treasured book; and not even in wartime can the publishers afford to neglect him altogether. Wholesale dealing in books conducted for the benefit of very general readers who draw upon the libraries exclusively will pass over the head of the slow and steady purchaser. But it is this wholesale business which is the governing fact to-day, and it is to the libraries—to their administrators and clients—we must look to determine the average of taste and intelligence. The future of publishing will more and more depend upon an alert and discriminating demand of library subscribers for the best they can obtain; and, where this alertness and discrimination fail, upon the guidance and advice of the libraries themselves. There is a large section of the public which goes to the libraries for "something to read," and is susceptible to tactful advice and leading by librarians both in their general choice of books and their special recommendation to individual subscribers. The big circulating libraries have a great deal of influence and power to-day, standing as they do midway between publishers, many of whom are anxious to produce books not wholly ephemeral, and the public, which is not always able to find its way unassisted to

the better literature. Everyone who wants to see the public taste wisely directed must needs watch the careers of our big circulating libraries with sincere wishes for their able and successful management.

OUR PROSE TYRTÆUS.

"The Book of the Thin Red Line." By Sir Henry Newbolt. Illustrated by Stanley L. Wood. Longmans. 5s. net.

THIS book deals with the same period as Sir Henry Newbolt's "Book of the Blue Sea"; it tells of the same wars, only it follows them from the sea into great battles on land; and these are always the battles that end wars. Waterloo was won ten years after Trafalgar, and throughout these ten years no man knew which side would gain the final victory. Four years after Trafalgar England tried to get herself defeated. She sent 40,000 men on a wild-goose expedition to Walcheren—at the very moment when Wellington was in sore need of troops in the Peninsula. England has never understood that sea power has limits and that the knock-out blow in war must be given on land. Though Wellington defeated Napoleon, she has kept all her gratitude for Nelson; not once in a thousand years has she set a just value on military force and foresight. So we are glad that Sir Henry Newbolt has passed from the sea into land campaigns.

Only one thing can teach our country never to misuse her naval supremacy, and this one thing is military knowledge. A hundred and six years separate Walcheren from Gallipoli, separate them and yet unite them, for Gallipoli and Walcheren come into history from the same failing in our national character. Because the Navy keeps us safe at home, we decline to think over the limits of her jurisdiction in war. She is expected to do absurd things, and notably the work of armies. The decisive part of her duty is to conduct troops in adequate number to the military fronts. She began the present war by conducting 60,000 men to France, when 600,000 were needed there. Thus England prolongs her wars.

Military training should be given to every boy, and Sir Henry Newbolt is an ideal teacher, for he never seems to teach. He discovers in boys the hearts of grown men, and enables the old to feel that they are still young in spirit. "I have chosen six good men," he says, "and pieced together these stories of their lives, using their own words whenever it was possible, and taking each of them from the earliest moment when we began to think of soldiering. Early enough it was with some of them—Robert Blakeney was only fifteen when he got his commission, and some of the others were not much older; all of them were boys, and they took wars as boys take their games, with a mixture of fun and deadly earnest: like Ulysses, they enjoyed greatly and suffered greatly."

Not a sentence in this brave book beats the big drum. The rhetoric of recruiting campaigns may be useful, but it is far off from the cool, natural honour that Sir Henry speaks about. The tone of his book seems to say: "Let us see what courage can do, but let us not praise it, because courage is a natural thing, while cowardice is degeneration and very hateful." And Sir Henry never flatters his own generation. "When you have read these stories," he says to boys, "you will understand what war can be when it is carried on in a right cause and by men who are patriots without being Huns; and you will see that our officers and men of to-day, fine as they are, can hardly do more than equal their forefathers in courage, in military skill, or in endurance against heavy odds."

There is also another point in which Sir Henry runs counter to the "splash pages" of newspapers and to the rhetoric of public speakers. To-day it is a fashion to talk as if the history of our Army were altogether free from misdeeds. Sir Henry describes the retreat to Corunna—one of the most disorderly retreats that any war has known. Sir John Moore

said to his reserve at Calcabellos: "If the enemy are in possession of Bembibre, which I believe, they have got a rare prize. They have taken or cut to pieces many hundred drunken British cowards—for none but unprincipled cowards would get drunk in presence, nay in the very sight of the enemies of their country; and, sooner than survive the disgrace of such infamous misconduct, I hope that the first cannon-ball fired by the enemy may take me in the head."

The dreadful scenes that followed the taking of Badajos—scenes that lasted for three whole days—are related with unflinching candour by Sir Henry Newbolt. And he says: "The sack of Badajos was a disgrace under which those who love the honour of the British Army must always burn with shame. They may get what consolation they can from remembering that it was not a deliberate crime, done by order, and designed in cold blood for the torturing of a conquered people. Our officers fought against it at the risk of their lives, our generals sternly punished it, our people heard of it with horror and with reprobation. The British Army of to-day is separated from such deeds by a gulf wider than a hundred years of time."

But it is fair to add that England in those days treated her soldiers very badly, both during wars and afterwards; and the moral character of men was tried very severely by the Empire's needs. Some regiments in a few years fought in India, in Egypt, in Spain, in France, and in North America, so that they were always in danger and always far off from home. Yet their private conduct as a rule was good, and their courage in war has never been excelled.

Sir Henry Newbolt speaks of many battles, ranging from those in the Peninsula to the most famous of our Indian victories. And he tells the story of Stonewall Jackson and the American Civil War. "I confess to you," he says, "that I would rather read or write of Stonewall Jackson than even of Outram himself: the very names of his battles are poetry, his life should be written as a great epic, a modern 'Iliad,' and his death is one of the greatest and most moving tragedies of war. Though he was not of the Thin Red Line, he came of the same race and made war after the same chivalrous fashion: in all our battles of to-day his spirit is at home and stirring."

GIFT BOOKS.

"A Christmas Carol." Illustrated by Arthur Rackham. Heinemann. 6s.

Christmas, as most English people think of it to-day, owes nearly as much to Dickens as to St. Nicholas. Dickens took a handful of English things and put them all into relation with Christmas. Good cheer and good will were at the head of a list which included the English winter and an English ghost. Dickens, moreover, dedicated one characteristic tale entirely to Christmas; and we have shown our gratitude for the gift almost yearly by putting it into a new edition. This year it is Mr. Heinemann who issues it forth in good print, and entrusts its illustrations to a colleague he has tested many times before in other enterprises.

Mr. Rackham's pictures are as English as the text they illustrate—as English as the pictures which, two years ago, he gave to his Christmas book of nursery rhymes. This book of rhymes—the best collection of modern years—is, we note, still to be had from Mr. Heinemann, and should certainly not be lost sight of by those who are looking for a book that goes well with the season. Mr. Rackham has illustrated the "Carol" with the same light and fantastical expressiveness which has already made Jack Sprat and scores of English gobins so acceptable to the eye. Mr. Rackham's "Scrooge" is a kinsman of the odd people with which he has peopled Kensington Gardens and the country of Humpty-Dumpty and the Broomstick. Yet he has also a true touch of Dickens. There is a homeliness in his fantasy, and a humorously strict justice, which goes admirably with the text. There is no need to describe any of these pictures at length. Mr. Rackham's manner is too well known and too unalterably happy. Here, in brief, is a book to put beside the others with which Mr. Rackham has added to the pleasures of Christmas. The "Carol" itself will take it to many a hearth.

So long as Christmas is kept after the old English fashion this tract for the day will be received with honour. This is an admirable new edition of the story which should be amongst the most popular of Christmas books.

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"These lovers cry Oh! oh! they die!
Yet that which seems to wound, to kill,
Doth turn oh! oh! to ha! ha! he!
So dying love lives still.

Mr. Robinson decorates the first line with a bevy of watching maidens on a hillside. There is a pensive prettiness in the group, but jollity and heartiness are far away. Mr. Robinson's picture would be more in place in a book of Thomas Moore. Nevertheless this is a book pleasant to handle and most welcome in a time which starves for a comely book. Messrs. Duckworth have done their work well.

"The Water Babies." Illustrated by W. Heath Robinson. Constable. 6s.

No better illustrator could be found for Kingsley's fairy-tale than Mr. Heath Robinson. As will be expected of the illustrator of Rabelais—an illustrator who interleaved that mighty book with sketches which really added a zest to its pages—he is better in his grotesque than in his sentimental work. There is, it is true, some charming sentiment in these pages—notably offered to the reader in the illustration printed on the cover; but we like his sunfish and his "most distinguished lobster" better than his little girls—better even than his babies.

Kingsley's story wears wonderfully well considering how clearly it belongs to its own day—the day of the Christmas Carol, when even Fancy had to carry a sturdy moral upon its wings. Is it generally known, by the way, that Kingsley included the SATURDAY REVIEW among the good things which were recommended by his famous committee of doctors? These were:

Coaxing.
Kissing.
Champagne and Turtle.
Red herrings and Soda water.
Good advice.
Musical Soirées.
Aunt Sally.
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"Pirates." By Lovat Fraser. Simpkin, Marshall. 3s. 6d. net.

This is no romantic, gentlemanly treatment of a theme dear to the young; but an edition of old and authentic tales of piracy, presented in a way which preserves much of the old crudity of flavour. Mr. Lovat Fraser's woodcuts of famous pirates, printed in crude greens, reds and yellows, are most admirably executed, in the spirit of that older edition which issued in 1735 from Amen Corner. For this is a book with a history. Its title in 1735 was "The History and Lives of all the Most Notorious Pirates and their Crews," and it was written, as Mr. Fraser reminds us, when

piracy was not romantic fiction, but a serious nuisance. It includes accounts of Avery, Teach and Kidd—not the chivalrous and gallant figures which pirates have come to be in books for boys, but thieving cut-throats who richly deserved to be hanged, and often were. Mr. Fraser offers us here a document of history as well as a very able and curious piece of craftsmanship. It is a book for boys, despite the more picturesque accounts that usually are served to them. The truth always carries well with young readers, and here is a book as true in its history as in the frank and simple art of its compiler.

"The Ballet of the Nations. A Present-Day Morality." By Vernon Lee. With a Pictorial Commentary by Maxwell Armfield. Chatto. 2s. 6d.

This is an allegory of the present war written with a bitter indignation. The characters of the Ballet are the fighting nations, and its figures successively portray the martyrdom of Europe under the heels of the combatants. The fine rage with which the pageant is unfolded prompts us to overlook the lack of restraint in the writing and the crudity of the author's mocking. This is not the sort of satire which endures as literature for another age. It expresses rather the fury of the moment, when the artist has little time or patience for art, but goes directly to the raw facts. Vernon Lee's stage, like the actual battlefield, is littered with "blood and entrails"; the dancers dance, though they are maimed and bleeding, and we are asked to contemplate a "living jelly of blood and trampled flesh". The Smallest-Dancer-of-All is Belgium, who opens the ballet with a defiance of a tall and very well-trained performer: "the poor Smallest-Dancer-of-All tripped up that giant and made him reel. But the giant instantly recovered his feet, although his eyes became bloodshot and his brain swam. And, flinging the Smallest Dancer on the floor, he set to performing on its poor little body one of the most terrific *pas seuls* that Ballet Master Death had ever invented, while the *vis-à-vis* Nations danced slowly up till they had come to grips over that Smallest-of-all-the-Dancers, who lay prone on the ground, and continued so to lie, pounded out of all human shape into a dancing mat for the others." The successive figures of the Ballet are rendered in cart ons, conventional but expressive, by Mr. Maxwell Armfield.

"The Story of the Tower of London." By René Francis. With twenty Collotypes and an Etched Frontispiece by Louis Weirter. Harrap. 21s.

Both the author and illustrator of this story of the Tower seem to be thoroughly possessed by the antiquity and significance of their subject. The descriptions of Mr. Francis are heavy with a sense of history. He seems to have come young to his subject, and to have felt something of the awe and delight of a boy in the building which Harrison Ainsworth has made so "terrible and dear". Most of us who can feel to-day, under the prosaic shadow of the surrounding warehouses and barracks and under a strict necessity to ignore that nasty triumph of the engineer which rules it from the river, the beauty and the crowding associations of London's ancient fortress, are usually those who have come young under its spell. For us the Tower is more tightly packed with emotion than Westminster itself. Mr. Francis does full justice to all that the most devoted pilgrim feels. He writes not at all like a guide, but like a friend who can make the ancient stones of his fortress live again, and can share with us the indignation for a vandalism which so often frustrates their appeal and the sorrow for the accidents which are bound to happen to all ancient things in a free country. Mr. Weirter helps him with pictures, most skilfully selected to eliminate what is modern and impertinent, and true to the original lines of some very beautiful architecture.

"Oxford." By Andrew Lang. Illustrated by George F. Carline. Seeley. 12s. 6d.

As Mr. Lang points out in his preface—for here is another posthumous book of the writer we so greatly miss to-day—Oxford is not easily reproduced in black and white. None of its moods is well caught in pure line work—neither the watery light, the mists of winter, the golden glow of spring sunshine, the cold green of Lent, the uncertain outlines of November, the splash of autumn.

The best pictures we have seen of Oxford were, curiously enough, the work of Mr. Markino, the Japanese artist, who found

there at their most characteristic the fogs and mists which never fail to astonish and stimulate him. Oxford without its tricks of atmosphere and colour is not Oxford at all; and Mr. Carline is well advised to order his pictures accordingly. Mr. Lang's text is discursive and charming. He wanders happily back into Oxford, talking at large of the revolutions in religion and thought and social custom and art which Oxford has assisted to their origin and decline. Discursiveness admirably fits the theme of Oxford. The true Oxford is difficult to review—it has never yet been done—because Oxford has such a diversity and so many voices. The Oxford of one man is unknown to the Oxford of another. "We shall have considered Oxford to very little purpose," says Mr. Lang towards the end of his book, "if it is not plain that the University has been less a home of learning than a microcosm of English intellectual life". And Oxford is more than that, as present events have shown. It is also a place where traditions of public service, the sense that England is greater than any Englishman, the impulse to work not primarily for material reward, the cultivation of knowledge not merely useful and ambitions, not merely personal, are cultivated not consciously or with a virtue aware of itself, but instinctively and without protestation or fuss. This comely book, presenting a part of Oxford to the world, comes most happily into this time of proof.

"Morals for the Young." By Marcus. Illustrated by George Morrow. Lane. 2s. net.

These are the morals of Sir Marcus Ordeyne, who now, Mr. W. J. Locke informs us, is walking about somewhere in France, clad in ill-fitting khaki, but safe from all personal harm, doing clerical work in Havre. In his absence Mr. Locke edits a rhyming theory of education for the young and Mr. Morrow wittily comments upon its clauses thus:—

Should you a hedgehog see one day,
Don't kick the harmless beast away.
Take it up tenderly instead,
And put it into baby's bed.

In addition to moral precepts of this character, there is a history of little Mary's pets. The lamb was only one of a crowd. For instance:

Mary had a little cake—
She left it in the sun;
But when she came for it, she found
A very hot, cross bun.

"Bill the Minder." Written and illustrated by W. Heath Robinson. Constable. 6s. net.

Mr. Heath Robinson published this excellent book in 1912, and here it is again looking for all the world like a new work. Now a Christmas book is not intended to last for more than one year, so a reviewer is perplexed when he has to admire the same book twice under the same name and in precisely the same stories and drawings. A rule of the market has been broken. Christmas is the time for repetitions and not for reissues. But a rule that is rarely broken suffers no harm, and Mr. Heath Robinson adds the novelty of a cheaper price to his transgression. What with 16 illustrations in colour and 130 in black and white, besides all the merry text, this book at 6s. net is likely to flutter the novelists. If "Bill the Minder" does not gain in popularity his old readers will be astonished.

"The Dream of Gerontius." By John Henry Cardinal Newman. Illustrated by Stella Langdale. An Introduction by Gordon Tidy. John Lane. 3s. 6d. net.

In all respects a beautiful book. Miss Stella Langdale is one of Nature's artists: she has much in common with Louisa, Lady Waterford, of whom G. F. Watts wrote with great admiration; and she finds in Newman's poem a spirit akin to her own. At a time when the boys and girls of art try to be freakish it is difficult to find a young talent unaffected by the whimsies of "isms" or of schools. Miss Langdale is one: she works as freely as a bird sings, and her spontaneous art is daintily austere and imaginative. Mr. Gordon Tidy's introduction is a capital piece of bibliophile history, and the publisher has done his work so well that the book would be cheap at 7s. 6d. net.

"Vigée-Lebrun: Her Life, Works, and Friendships." By W. H. Helm. Hutchinson. 21s. net.

It was worth while to do this book because Vigée-Lebrun played a notable part in the social history of a very eventful time. As a portrait painter she is still attractive. In pictures of mothers and children she has a womanly penetration and a charm beyond the reach of her male rivals. Her art at its best is maternal; it fondles, and its caresses are never insipid and mawkish. But its variety has a narrow range—it would be monotonous but for the good fortune that brought famous sitters to Vigée-Lebrun. Happily a sense of fun saved this woman painter from the pitfalls of ambition into which Angelica Kauffmann fell so often. Never did she try hard to be "a painter of history". It seemed to her best to enter history by a short cut just by portraying the notable persons of her time.

Mr. Helm has done his work very well indeed; his twenty-seven chapters journey here and there as lively tourists and gossip, and his catalogue of the painter's works has a value that students of history will appreciate. As for the illustrations, they include a good many of the finer portraits: Louise, Duchesse d'Orléans, Vigée-Lebrun as a girl, Madame d'Angeard, La Comtesse de Béon, "Femme et L'Amour," several pictures of Marie Antoinette, La Marquise de Verdun, the auto-portrait in the National Gallery, "Peace and Abundance," le Comte de Vaudreuil, Madame Dugazon as "Nina," Vigée-Lebrun and her daughter Julie, Yolande, Duchesse de Polignac, Hubert Robert, Emma, Lady Hamilton, Mrs. Chinnery, Madame Vestris, Madame Grassini, and some others. Somehow the portraits of some English sitters are inferior in character and in technical inspiration.

"The Earle Collection of Early Staffordshire Pottery." By Major Cyril Earle. With an Introduction by Frank Falkner and a Supplementary Chapter by T. Sheppard. Brown. 25s. net.

Here is a very fine work illustrating more than seven hundred different pieces. Major Earle knows all that is to be known about his hobby, and his catalogue has permanent value to students. The introduction by Mr. Frank Falkner is brief and good; he writes two pages also on Toby Jugs. Mr. T. Sheppard discusses the evolution of the potter's art, adding to his careful survey some pages of well-chosen illustrations.

To find fault with a man's hobby is not wise. Staffordshire pottery has very little value as art, but it helps us to understand the social mind of England from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth. Not even the simplest principles of decoration were understood by the Staffordshire potters. Too much was usually the enemy of enough. If they turned cabbage leaves into saltglaze teapots and cream jugs they were perfectly certain that they had done something very good. Here and there a man of note appeared, such as Enoch Wood, but he cuts a small figure as soon as he is compared with the Italians and the Persians. A sense of fine colour is altogether absent from Staffordshire work; the sense of form is very imperfect, and much time and money was wasted on inappropriate "ornament". Even to-day the pottery liked and bought by the English people is very fussy and very bad, though art schools have tried for thirty years or so to raise the standard of taste in the household crafts.

"Lullabies of the Four Nations." By Adelaide L. J. Gossett. De La More Press. 7s. 6d. net.

Much folklore is hidden in the popular lullabies of the British Islands. The fairies enter and the hobgoblins, and unpopular historical figures like Black Old Noll and Black Douglas. It has always been the way to make of terrible persons in history a bogie to frighten the children. The Saracens hushed their babies with the name of King Richard of England; whereas the good cavalier mother would sing of Oliver the Protector of Great Britain and Ireland:

"Baby, baby, he's a giant,
Tall and big as Lincoln's steeple,
Breakfasts, dines and sups (rely on't)
Every day on naughty people."

The lullabies in this book run from simple jingles like "Bee baw Bunting" up to the civilised poetry of Tennyson and Mr. Robert Bridges. But the authors have made them mostly

a collection of traditional folk lullabies. Some of the most beautiful are the Christian lullabies inspired by the Nativity. The whole collection is a beautiful enshrining of the inarticulate tenderness and devotion of mothers. Some of these old rhymes speak more eloquently than the finest poetry. Take, for example, the Scottish refrain:

"Hee O, wee O, what would I do wi' you?
Black's the life that I lead wi' you;
Mony o' you, little fer to gi' you,
Hee O, wee O, what would I do wi' you?"

This has the poignancy of the greatest literature.

"Corners of Grey Old Gardens." Illustrated in Colour by Margaret Waterfield. Foulis. 3s. 6d. net.

This is an excellently printed anthology of most delightful essays upon gardening. The essays include Sir Walter Scott's essay on "Landscape Gardening" and an anonymous paper from the SATURDAY REVIEW on "The Gardener's Philosophy". There is also the charming introduction to the Herbal of John Gerarde. Sir Walter Scott has said some excellent things upon gardens. "Nothing is more completely the child of art than a garden. Its artificial productions are necessarily surrounded by walls marking out the space which they occupy as something totally distinct from the rest of the domain." That is true, and obvious when said; but worth saying none the less. This little book is prettily illustrated; but the delicate taste of the artist seems to have suffered a little from the three-colour process.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.

"Russian Fairy Tales." By Nisbet Bain. Illustrated by Noel Nisbet. From the Skazki of Plevnoi. Harp. 7s. 6d.

"New Tales and Legends of the Rhine." By Lewis Spence. With sixteen collotypes after drawings by Louis Weirter. Harp. 10s. 6d.

Even in their legendary days the Germans seemed to be preparing doctrine and philosophy for a later age—not, of course, the crude doctrine of the Prussian prize-fighter, but the grandiose shadow shows of Wagner and Schiller. There was always megalomania and a hint of the categorical in the German character—a trait which their Prussian masters to-day have turned to the special uses of war. The love of vast outline, the docile worship of the giantlike, which has prompted the Germans to-day to adore at the feet of the immense wooden effigy of Hindenburg in Berlin, was at work in the primitive forests and hills of Germany, where Odin and Brunhild walked familiar. At this Christmas season we may hope that this docility may one day be turned to better uses than those to which the modern Prussians have misdirected it. Meantime we doubt whether the "Hero Tales and Legends" of Mr. Spence will be as popular with English readers as the "Russian Fairy Tales" of Mr. Nisbet Bain. For one thing, we are only just beginning to draw upon Russian sources for our folk-tales. Germany has been running almost dry since German romanticism found its mighty musical voice in Wagner, whereas Russia has yet to be known and better loved. There is a truer simplicity in the Russian primitives—a quaint exactitude presenting a marked contrast with the vague hugeness and fogginess of the Teuton. Many of the tales here presented by Mr. Bain are perfect in their detail, with a clarity as finished as a Japanese print or the conscious art of Andersen. Mr. Bain has taken his tales from M. Plevnoi's Russian versions. The pictures in these books will please children with their solid workmanship and bright colours.

"Still More Russian Picture Tales." By Valery Carriek. Oxford Blackwell. 2s. 6d. net.

Perhaps our readers will remember the welcome we gave last Christmas to "More Russian Picture Tales". Here is another little book of the same simple, shrewd and homely character—with speaking and expressive pictures which will convey a meaning to the youngest. Most of these tales are about animals—the wolf and the fox being most often chosen. In their style and humour they are more like the stories of Uncle Remus than of Grimm. These animals are full of smart and clever tricks and dodges—some of them designed to serve a practical turn, but many of them simply arise out of the humorous wish to score

a point at somebody else's expense. The Russians, from their fairy tales, would seem to be great practical jokers. One of the most characteristic stories here is the story of a fox who told his friend the wolf that he could catch fish for his supper by putting his tail into a hole in the ice and waiting for a bite. The fox then sang an incantation, and the ice froze. This is in the spirit of the famous mutual entertainment of the crane and the fox, which, we observe, figures here as of Russian origin.

"Indian Fairy Stories." By Donald A. Mackenzie. Blackie. 3s. 6d. net.

When fresh fairy stories are needed, one good plan is to seek them in the East. Those, one finds, though by no means new, have all the charm of novelty. A peculiar feature of them is the close connection they suggest between men and animals, and one notes that most of the animals of which they tell, unlike our Puss in Boots, have retained their natural qualities and characteristics, or, at least, those with which popular fancy endows them. The jackal, for instance, is always presented in his true colours as a sly, thieving beast, whilst the crow, judged, perhaps, by his sober appearance and solitary habits, is always the philosopher among birds. In these stories, too, one discovers much of the humour which most of our fairy legends seem to lack, and for that one gladly forgives the narrator his truly Oriental habit of moralising and improving the occasion. Many of the points in the Indian tales will scarcely get home with the average child, but the book will be valued for the fun and spirit of its more obvious passages.

"Wonder Tales from the Greek and Roman Myths." By Gladys Davidson. Blackie. 2s. 6d.

Classic mythology, although it was once considered a necessary subject of study in schools for young ladies who were never intended to go any further in their classical education, presents many difficulties to those who would interpret it for children. The effort to hand on only such portions as seem suitable for a very young mind involves a good deal of disguise, and an almost completely false idea of paganism is likely to be started. Kingsley succeeded with his "Heroes", but Miss Davidson, dealing with a score or more of legends, has on several occasions found herself in difficulties. We may congratulate her on her skill in getting out of them, but has the whole thing been worth while? Might not boys and girls wait a little longer until they can have the tales without gloss or varnish, and, if possible, from original sources? Most of the illustrations in the book are excellent, but we cannot imagine why King Midas is dressed as though he had lived to be an alderman under the Tudors.

"Stories from the Earthly Paradise." By William Morris. Retold in Prose by C. S. Evans. Arnold. 6s.

The idea of this book is to rescue William Morris from himself—a clever idea, well carried out; but why should Morris not be left in peace with his own tiny circle of enthusiastic readers? Morris's tales are legends well known in other versions; but boys and girls, if they have not read the other versions and if they cannot learn to read "The Earthly Paradise", may now read them here. Ten of the tales are retold in this book, very well retold, but we doubt whether Morris would have wished to be translated into a new self and a new style.

"Things." By Dolf Wyllarde. Illustrated by B. M. Peirse and Charles Vane. Fisher Unwin. 5s. net.

We suspect that this book owes a little to Lewis Carroll. There is at any rate a similarity of manner and even of matter. Carroll loved the Walrus and the Gryphon, and all his people argued and played with words like any Elizabethan. The author of "Things" has a Redeggulous and a No-opinions bird, who are full of Carroll's literary playfulness and live in a world which is equally fanciful and matter-of-fact. Mr. Charles Vane and Lady Peirse have helped the author to realise her notions with as devoted a care as Tenniel showed for Alice. Not that this book is in any sense a plagiarism. It simply follows a good example and follows it with a quiet fancy and an ingenious sense of fun. Ernestine—the Alice of the tale—will find many friends among people of all ages and her strange associates will find a place in our memory not far off from the Cheshire cat who smiled.

"The Stars and their Mysteries." By C. E. Gibson. Seeley, Service. 3s. 6d.

Mr. Gibson's object in this pleasantly written volume has been to satisfy the curiosity of children about the nature of sun, moon, and stars, and to whet their appetite for further inquiry on astronomy. The author has done a great deal of work in the way of books on popular science, and he knows well how to make every page both informative and entertaining. He makes a voyage with his young readers to the moon, to Saturn of the rings, and to Mars, which, by the way, he will not on any account believe to be inhabited, and in those other worlds he points out to them the things they would see were the voyage actually made possible. At other times Mr. Gibson tells of simple experiments by which are explained the behaviour of the sun and the planets. Questions which children are likely to ask are answered, and passing from chapter to chapter one finds such problems examined as "How does the moon stick up in the sky?" and "What makes the tides go out and come in?" It is well worth reading.

"The Kingdom of the Winding Road." By Cornelia Meigs. Illustrated by Frances White. Macmillan. 5s. net.

These good chapters—there are twelve in all—were printed in America, and they have come in a book to England because they belong to all children, but particularly to those who like stories better than sleep. The titles alone defy sleep, and not a chapter is long enough to be unkind to wakefulness. Even after dinner on Christmas Day this book can be read aloud to those who are not grown up and dull—dull till tea stirs them up. "Twopenny Town" and "The Palace of Bubbles" come first, and at the end of the book come "The Sword of the Lady Isobel" and "The Beggar's Christmas Feast". There should be in every street an Autolycus for tales of this good sort.

"Dean's Rag Books" (2-14 Newington Butts) continue, in spite of the war, to go abroad everywhere except to enemy countries. They are British made—one of the children's acquisitions in which Great Britain easily leads the way. These books are admirable examples of a choice adaptation of means to ends. The fussy detail of realism being out of the question, the designers of these books were inspired, long before post-impressionism was heard of, to go in for something simpler in line and colour than anything in the academies. This year, to show how an artist can apply the formula, the directors have invited Mr. Joshio Markino to "Japan" a number of our English nursery rhymes. The results are most happy. There is also a new alphabet in pictures which has never been bettered, and some new "beasts" in the luxurious "Fluffdown" series. The prices (ranging from 4d. to 6s.) of these books make them accessible for all tastes and purposes. It is at this time of day, when these books are known so well, possibly unnecessary to assert that they really are reasonably proof against any attempt of the ordinary child to destroy them. The pictures can neither be torn nor eaten.

BOOKS FOR BOYS.

"The British Navy Book." By Lieut.-Col. and Brevet Col. Cyril Field. Blackie. 3s. 6d. net.

It is quite as good as the British Army Book, for it is full of great deeds that fire the imagination. Only one fault can be found with its profuse contents. The frontispiece, representing a huge man-of-war, is entitled "Britain's Sure Shield", as if our Navy had freed herself for ever from the uncertainties of battle and liked to brag about this achievement. Cockiness has nothing to do with our naval traditions; Nelson went on his knees and prayed that victory might come to him. To feel entirely sure is to be unsafe among the new perils of naval warfare. Lieut.-Col. Field, apart from this one oversight in his frontispiece, is as thoughtful as he is invigorating. His prologue on the command of the sea is excellent, and his twenty-one chapters could not well be bettered. They deal with many and various topics: with a lesson from Caesar, with ancient warships, with fighting ships of the Middle Ages and mediæval sea fights, with the Navy in Tudor times, and so on, until at last he comes to stirring events in the present war. Riches indeed!

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"Through Russian Snows." By G. A. Henty. Blackie. 3s. 6d. net.

Here is a new edition of Mr. Henty's brisk and thrilling story of Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. It contains more than 350 pages of the good stuff that greybeards like quite as much as the younger boys; and, while telling a yarn with plenty of imagination in it, nothing is said in the least at odds with historic truth. Indeed, Mr. Henty gets rid of a good many misconceptions which have gathered around the retreat. Most people believe, for example, that all the worst fortune fell to the lot of Napoleon's troops, though the number of Russians that perished was at least as great as that of their foe. Their sufferings from cold were terrible: no fewer than 90,000 died; and out of 10,000 recruits who afterwards marched for Wilna as a reinforcement only 1,000 reached this city, and the most of these had to be taken at once to the hospital, for they were mutilated from frost-bite. For the rest, perhaps the most pleasant characteristic of Mr. Henty is the natural ease with which he makes real in his rapid prose every detail of his subject-matter.

"Ian Hardy: Senior Midshipman." By Commander Currey, R.N. Seeley, Service. 5s.

Although the Army to-day may hold the greater share of popular attention, one cannot believe that the boys of England are forgetful of their traditional love of the Navy. Of those who are now writing for them stories of the sea, Commander Currey holds, perhaps, the leading position. He has a gift of narrative, a keen sense of humour, and, above all, he writes from a full stock of knowledge. In two earlier volumes he has recorded the previous adventures of Ian Hardy, so in Ian we have already a popular character, and all who have known him will want to better their friendship. The mischievous boy, one notes, is gradually growing into a fine officer, but he is as good a companion as ever, and the story carries a reminder that even in what are normally judged to be times of peace the work of the Navy continues almost at full pressure. Some of the most exciting incidents of this tale concern an occasion when British ships and sailors had to suppress the flagitious conduct of a certain South American dictator. Small beer to a war with Germany, of course, yet more exhilarating, undoubtedly, to those who took part in it.

"The Romance of the Spanish Main." By Norman J. Davidson. Seeley, Service. 5s.

This is a book full of good reading. Taste changes with time, but we can scarcely imagine that a day will ever come when healthy boys refuse to be fascinated by a narrative of pirates and Red Indians. Here we get them both, and, as well, there are the "Dons", who among all our foes were, perhaps, the only ones at whom an Englishman never ventured to laugh. With all these materials ready in the romantic history of the Spanish Main, Mr. Davidson has written an entrancing and thrilling chronicle. Drake, Grenville, and Raleigh are among his heroes, and there are other sea-dogs, too, the recital of whose names, though it cannot fill us with pride, must, despite the lapse of centuries, provoke emotion. Morgan and, in later years, "Blackbeard" Teach held a mastery of the sea on their own account, and were as notorious for their courage as for their cruelty.

"The Invisible War-Plane." By Claude Grahame-White and Harry Harper. Blackie. 3s. 6d.

The authors of "The Invisible War-Plane" have ventured in imagination some way beyond the point at which the aeronaut has yet arrived. In a preface they claim that, though the incidents they describe may seem surprising to-day, actual events are likely to eclipse them in the future. Certainly we should not dare to sneer at their prophecies. History has already made some of the romances of Jules Verne appear tame, and it may well be that it will eclipse in our own time the most wonderful suggestions made by Mr. Grahame-White and Mr. Harper. Their super-Zeppelin, in fact, fills the reader with an uneasy sense of dread. For reasons of convenience the period of this story is set in our own days, however, and in addition to the main interest of war with the Germans in the air, we come across incidents in which armoured motor-cars and submarines play their part. Altogether it is a modern tale, and though the book makes no pretence to be technical, it should stimulate the thought of those boys who have a scientific turn of mind.

"In Khaki for the King." By Escott Lynn. Chambers. 5s.

Here is a book with a story almost sufficiently explained by its title. Oliver and Vivian, the two heroes, are heroes in more than the conventional sense which the word usually carries in fiction. In these days we hear from the Front a good deal of the monotony of the war, but this couple were never short of personal interest. In the beginning there is an escape from Germany, then service with the gallant Belgian army, and then fighting in the British forces at Mons, Ypres, and Neuve Chapelle. At intervals the pair are engaged in secret service work, and for a while are prisoners in the hands of the enemy. This seems to be the weakest part of the tale, the interview between the young captives and the Kaiser having no sort of relation to probability. It is beyond comprehension why he should trouble to argue with them as to whether he or King George has the better right to the British throne, whilst his pardon for them is flatly in contradiction to all we know of German methods. Perhaps, however, the book was written before the murder of Miss Cavell. In other respects Mr. Lynn has done well, and boys who want a topical story will find it here.

"The Outlaw of the Shell." By John Finnemore. Chambers. 3s. 6d.

Mr. Finnemore is a capable writer of tales of school life. His methods, his plot, and his characters have no particularly original features, but originality in this kind of work is not, perhaps, very much wanted. A school is a strangely conservative place, and no great difference is to be seen between one generation of boys and another. The tradition is simply carried on, and so stories about boys, if they are really written for boys, must not change too much. Here we meet one Powlett, who, having been denied his wish to enter the Navy, is letting everything else slide. He is a decent, cheery sort of fellow, but undeniably slack, and quite convinced that his house is a beastly hole. So, as a matter of fact, it is; but strangely enough it is he, the outlaw, the dog with a bad name, who eventually plays a big part in bringing it back to the ways of honour. The last chapter is devoted to the description of the final tie for the school cup, and Powlett has both hands and his feet in winning the match.

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"The Golden Lattice." Edited by H. B. Elliott. Jarrold. 5s.

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Mrs. Nesbit contributes a delightful and original tale ("Recognition") about a child called Jane, who in her loneliness insists on being captured by the gipsies and, unlike the usual child of fiction, thoroughly enjoys it. Mrs. Baillie Reynolds ("A Friend in Need") writes of lovers' misunderstandings which, of course, end happily. Miss E. Haverfield gives us a Capulet and Montague story in which the estranged neighbours make up their differences over a fierce and sanguinary dog fight. There are stories of adventure, past and present, one of the best of which is "A Night Piece", by Katharine Tynan; stories of sentiment, including "Sisters", by Silas Hocking, a beautiful fantasy by Dolf Wyllarde called "Will o' the Wisp and Jack o' Lantern", and a dramatic sketch by Mrs. G. de Horne Vaizey which voices most people's sentiments about Christmas presents. Other contributions are equally or only in a slight degree less good. The book should prove popular enough to gain an important sum for the Red Cross Society, for which it makes an appeal.

"Mary's Meadow, and Other Tales of Fields and Flowers." By Juliana Horatia Ewing. Bell. 2s. 6d. net.

"Mary's Meadow" was the last serial story written by Mrs. Ewing. It appeared in "Aunt Judy's Magazine" from November 1883 to March 1884. Many plants are mentioned in the tale, and Mrs. Ewing received many letters about them. These letters she answered in the correspondence columns of the Magazine, and in July 1884 it was suggested that a society should be formed whose objects were "to search out and cultivate old garden flowers which have become scarce; to exchange seeds and plants; to plant waste places with hardy flowers; to circulate books on gardening amongst the members; and to try to prevent the extermination of rare wild flowers, as well as of garden treasures." This good society is merged now in the Selborne Society, and, like this little story, it is a fragrant monument to Mrs. Ewing, whose good gifts still nestle into children's minds.

"The Daughter of a Soldier." By L. T. Meade. Illustrations by Gordon Browne. Chambers, Ltd. 5s.

Maureen O'Brien, an orphan, is the soldier's daughter. She is a girl of surpassing beauty and virtue, loved by all around her except her cousins Daisy and Henrietta, who make her life a burden to her. They are repulsive girls whose insulting behaviour, habit of dancing on her new piano, and attempt to poison her horse render them impossible as housemates; and their stepfather—who is Maureen's uncle and has brought her up—takes them to Felicity, a school run on novel lines which deals out severe punishment for the insubordinate. Here Daisy

nearly starves herself to death, but is saved by Maureen and repents of her bad behaviour. It takes a visit to Rome and capture by a bandit to soften Henrietta, but this is at last accomplished, and the story ends in an orgy of affection. The scene is laid chiefly in Ireland, and the descriptions are good.

"Phyllis McPhilemy." By Mary Baldwin. Illustrated by W. A. Cuthbertson. Chambers, Ltd. 3s. 6d.

It seems a pity, when the outlook of a schoolgirl is already such a restricted one, that the special literature provided for her should deal in the main with the same life as that she is actually living—a series of school commonplaces which only illustrate the essential lack of proportion which is the chief evil of school life. Still, if we must have this special literature, Miss Baldwin's book is a very good example. Phyllis McPhilemy, a V.C.'s daughter, is a charming heroine and the story of her escapades and adventures makes good reading. Her schoolmates are recognisable types, from the genius to the prig, and the school-mistresses passably human. Perhaps the most amusing incident is that of the cook and the Belgian refugees.

"Dauntless Heart." By Mary Bradford Whiting. Illustrated by W. S. Stacey. S.P.C.K. 2s. 6d.

Leslie Keith, the daughter of the ex-manager of Weardale's cloth mill, is elected president of the Labour Association known as the League of Brotherhood. Trent Weardale, the young owner, loves her, and his love is returned, but they are kept apart by the mistakes of Trent and the uncompromising attitude of the League, which render it impossible for them, as the representatives of warring Capital and Labour, to come together. Eventually each side comes to a better understanding of the other, Leslie and Trent become engaged to be married, and the League is reconstituted with Trent as president. We understand that the mill is to be run in future on a profit-sharing basis. Would that all labour troubles could be settled thus easily. The story is vigorous and full of incident and the authoress seems to be acquainted with the problems of which she writes.

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